



European Union
Delegation of the European Commission
in South Africa

**... this week
in review**

This publication seeks to provide information on EU activities of interest to SA readers.



23 – 29 September 2005



Headline News

Building an open Europe in times of change – Speech by President JM Barroso (22/09/2005)



Addressing the European Ideas Network, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso said: "Europe needs to reform. The drivers for reform are well known; internally, we have 20 million unemployed and that is unacceptable from a social point of view. Externally, we see the extraordinary dynamism of the emerging economies. Equally, the double 'no' to the European Constitution and failure to agree on new financial perspectives have shaken people's faith in the European project. The rising tide of euroscepticism, even in traditionally supportive Member States, means that a growing number of our citizens now see the EU as part of the problem, not part of the solution. Despite these problems, I remain a realistic optimist ..."

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/546&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Europe's global trading challenge & the future of FTAs – Speech by Com P Mandelson (26/09/2005)

During a Foreign Policy Centre (Brighton, UK) debate on trade challenges and the future of free trade agreements (FTAs), EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson noted: "Developing countries have every right to exploit the legitimate comparative advantages they have. It is in this decade that the world is finally leaving the legacy of colonialism behind where Europe was able to shape the global pattern of production to suit its own interests. No more, I am afraid. Actually, I'm not afraid - I think it's right. Of course in our trade policies we should press the case for core labour standards and greater environmental responsibility around the world. But we must be careful that these issues are not interpreted by the developing world as a cover for disguised protectionism. The realities of globalisation should not push us into a state of pessimism. ..."

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/551&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

European Commission discusses Africa Strategy with Africa's regional organisations (29/09/2005)

Commissioner Louis Michel met Africa's regional organisations to discuss the European Commission's proposal for a new EU Strategy for Africa to be adopted on 12/10/2005. The meeting followed an in-depth written consultation over the past two months on the major ideas of the Strategy. This Strategy should provide a common, comprehensive, and coherent framework for action for all EU Member States and the European Commission to support Africa's efforts to reach the UN MDGs. Commissioner Michel insisted on the importance of this consultation: "Too many times, policies have been written about or for, rather than with the African partners. It is absolutely crucial that this strategy reflects Africa's vision and priorities."



See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1201&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Other News

Economic Partnership Agreements: EU and Caribbean launch 3rd phase of negotiations (28/09/2005)

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson travelled to St Lucia to launch the third phase of Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations between the European Union and the Caribbean region. The crucial third phase will launch negotiations on the text of a final agreement, encompassing the continued integration of the Caribbean regional economy and access to the European goods and services market.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1194&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>



EU & SA evaluate European Commission Support (26/09/2005)

A wide range of stakeholders including both South African beneficiaries as well as European partners discussed results of the internal evaluation of the European Commission's support to South Africa. With reference to the findings of an independent multi-national evaluation team, the parties reviewed the relevance of the European Programme for Reconstruction and Development (EPRD) in South Africa, as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of its implementation. The Programme is made up of EC grants in the region of R1 billion annually for its period of implementation from 2003 – 2006.



Mr Shaheed Rajie (National Treasury) addressing the recently held workshop

Accession negotiations with Turkey – Speech by Com O Rehn (20/09/2005)

Addressing the European Parliament Plenary Session, Commissioner Olli Rehn (Enlargement) said: “This debate about Turkey is timely. We are on the eve of the date fixed by the European Council for starting accession negotiations with Turkey. This opens a new phase in the EU-Turkey relations. The reasons which led the EU to decide to open accession negotiations with Turkey are unchanged: the EU needs a stable, democratic and prosperous Turkey, in peace with its neighbours, which takes over the EU values, policies and standards. The start of the negotiations will give a strong push for those in Turkey, who want to reform the country to meet the European values of rule of law and human rights; they are also a way for the EU to have leverage on the direction of these reforms.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/556&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EU requests second WTO arbitration on its revised proposal for the banana import regime (26/09/2005)

The EU submitted a request for a second arbitration on its proposal for a new import tariff for bananas from countries benefiting from Most Favoured Nation status. The Commission has carefully analysed the award from the first arbitration. It is confident that its revised proposal for an import duty of €187/tonne for MFN suppliers and a tariff quota of 775,000 tonnes at zero duty for bananas originating in ACP countries maintains market access for MFN suppliers and an equivalent level of preference for ACP suppliers as the current regime. The intention remains to have a tariff only system in place on 01/01/2006

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1188&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EU civil protection assistance to United States after hurricane Katrina (23/09/2005)

Assistance from 21 countries participating in the EU's Civil protection mechanism has so far been accepted by the United States in the clean-up after the hurricane Katrina. The assistance represents water pumps, first aid kits, meals, blankets, tents, telecommunications equipment etc. The bulk of European assistance has now been delivered. About 50 airplanes have gone from Europe to the US with equipment and personnel. Three further deliveries of donations from EU Member States to the US are scheduled still this week. Details of the assistance can be found in the annexed list. Approximately 150 European civil protection experts are or have been assisting the clean-up operations in the New Orleans region.

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/339&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Sudan (23/09/2005)

The European Union welcomes the 20/09/2005 announcement of the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU). This is a significant and historic step towards peace in Sudan. The EU congratulates both the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement for the courage they have shown in taking forward the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and welcomes the representation of other political parties in this Government. The EU now calls on the GNU to move forward quickly with other aspects of the implementation of the CPA, including as a first step the establishment of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission to monitor progress on this.

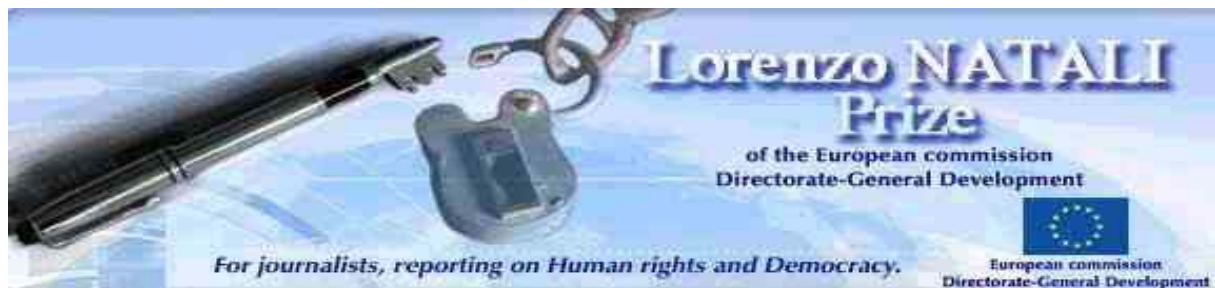
See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/05/239&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EU Experience & Strategic Approach to Regional Development – Speech by Com D Hübner (23/09/2005)

In her speech during a Bank Workshop on Regional Development (Washington D.C), entitled *Perspectives from the EU, EIB and ECA*, Commissioner Danuta Hübner (Regional Policy) said: “Our subject is regional and local development where, of course, the EU has played an important – and indeed growing – role in for over 30 years. Support from the Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and pre-accession instruments has been crucial to regional development strategies throughout the Union. ... Effective use of EU funds has been, I believe, a key factor in the success of many regions. The example of Ireland speaks for itself. In all Member States, including the more prosperous ones, there are countless best practice examples of projects that have helped to create self-sustaining jobs and enterprises, thus narrowing regional disparities and contributing to aggregate growth and employment.”

See: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/545&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

For further information please contact Frank Oberholzer at 012-452-5200



If you published an article on the defence of human rights or democracy in the developing world between 01/01/2004 and 31/08/2005 you may be eligible to compete for the Lorenzo Natali Prize for journalists given by the European Commission. see <http://www.nataliprize.info/index.php>